

INTERCHANGEABLE CLOCK HAVING THE APPEARANCE OF A FLOOR CLOCK AND KITS FOR PROVIDING SAME

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to an interchangeable clock that is mounted on a vertical surface, such as a wall, but has the appearance of being a free-standing floor clock, and kits for making the interchangeable clock.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Long-case clocks and tall-case clocks are historically known as floor clocks, and are commonly referred to as grandfather clocks by general consumers and horologists alike. “Grandmother clocks” are also floor clocks, but are typically shorter than 77” and are often made in a cherry finish. “Granddaughter clocks” are an even shorter member of the grandfather clock family.

[0003] Long-case clocks were first produced circa 1660 in England, driven by the 1657 invention of the long pendulum that required a long case. Thus, the pendulum that created a breakthrough in time keeping accuracy also introduced a new and unique form of furniture. The earliest long-case clocks were made in London for royalty or nobility, and these early clocks were both esthetically pleasing and horologically desirable. Each long-case clock component typically holds reliable indicia of the era in which the clock was originally designed to be as appealing as possible to its initial owner, in accord with the trends for the furniture, fabrics, porcelains and silver of that time. Fine clocks crafted by the most noted makers from 1660-1730 are now around 300 years old, and clocks made by early pioneers such as Tompion and Knibb commonly sell today for well over \$500,000.

[0004] Over time, the production of long-case clocks expanded, and such clocks became more widely available as manufacturers found ways to reduce the cost of long-case clocks to meet a wider market. Today, younger clocks typically have lower prices than their older counterparts. Still, grandfather clocks are

expensive furnishings and are often referred to as an “investment piece” or an “heirloom” piece.

[0005] Grandfather clock cabinets are crafted from fine hardwoods with a variety of finishes and veneers including oak (Yorkshire and Golden), cherry (heirloom, Merlot, Shaker, Windsor, Americana, Hampton), mahogany, walnut, carved shell overlays, glossy lacquers, antiqued, satin and metallic finishes. The clock faces can be metal-cast, pressed, carved or otherwise formed from a variety of materials and decorated with embellishments, while clock hardware, pendulums, and other essential components are made from brass, nickel and other suitable metals. Despite the fact that the costs of grandfather clocks have fallen such that they are no longer reserved solely for an elite noble class, long-case clocks typically cost between \$700 and \$10,000, with an average cost of about \$3000.

[0006] One available option is to purchase a grandfather clock kit that includes all the parts from which the owner can assemble a long-case clock. The kits are designed for all levels of skill, from sets of plans that merely contain detailed descriptions of how to make a clock from scratch to kits that include all of the pieces required for complete assembly, including pre-cut moldings and glass, and that usually only require a screwdriver or wood glue to complete. Even the kits designed for the less skilled hobbyist include an extensive number of parts, however, and the kits can be contained in as many as five or six separate cartons. Further, while some grandfather clock kits offer a more affordable alternative to pre-assembled long-case clocks, many kits can cost as much as, or even more than, pre-assembled long-case clocks themselves. For example, while some grandfather clock kits cost as little as \$500, others can cost as much as \$2500.

[0007] Grandfather clocks typically measure between 78 and 95 inches tall, 15-40 inches wide and 10-15 inches deep. The size, substantial weight, and relative delicacy of the horological components (i.e., working clock parts) limit the ability to rearrange grandfather clocks. Once the clock is positioned in a room, it is difficult to reposition. Moreover, most people find it desirable for

the design elements of the clock to harmonize with the style and design elements of the room in which it is featured. If an owner intends to refurbish a room while retaining the presence and position of the clock, the design elements of the clock may play a greater role in, or even dictate, the room redesign scheme.

[0008] That is, while the style and classic beauty of grandfather clocks are indeed timeless, today's decorating and interior design trends demand more flexibility, even from the design elements themselves. While sofas or chairs can be reupholstered and tables refinished, however, an heirloom piece like a long-case grandfather clock is designed to remain unchanged by the trends of time. Yet a long-case clock can still be a stunning design element even among the trendiest of contemporary styles.

[0009] Thus, it would be desirable to provide an adaptable, affordable horological design element that could be featured in a room in the same manner as a traditional long-case clock, but which could also be easily moved to a different location within a room or to another room. It would be desirable to provide a wall clock having the appearance of a free-standing long-case clock, that has adaptable features that allow owners to change the overall appearance of the clock based on their personal design needs, and that offers the interchangeable design flexibility of providing timeless elegance or trendy style. It would also be desirable to provide a clock that could be assembled or disassembled from few pieces in a few quick and easy steps for storage, transport, sales presentation or shipping purposes. Further, it would be desirable to provide an interchangeable clock having the appearance of a free-standing floor clock that is available as a kit including one, two or more different design element options. It would also be desirable to provide other accessory kits to offer extended design options beyond the basic kit selections.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] It is an object of the present invention to provide an attractive and affordable time piece that can be featured in a room in the same manner as a

traditional long-case clock, but which can also be easily repositioned within the room or moved to another room. It is another object of the present invention to provide an easily repositionable wall clock that has the appearance of a free-standing long-case clock. Another object of the present invention is to provide a clock having adaptable features that allow owners to change the overall appearance of the clock based on their personal design needs and that offers the design flexibility of interchangeably providing timeless elegance or trendy style. Yet another object of the present invention to provide a clock that can be assembled from a few pieces or disassembled in a few quick and easy steps for storage, transport, sales presentation or shipping purposes. Further, it is also an object of the present invention to provide a clock kit including one, two or more different design element options and to provide other accessory kits that offer extended design options beyond the basic kit selections.

[0011] According to one embodiment of the present invention, a clock kit is provided, including a mounting member adapted to be fastened to a vertical mounting surface in a position that is spaced a predetermined distance from an intersection of the vertical surface and a horizontal surface. The clock kit also includes at least one interchangeable main body portion adapted to extend from the mounting member toward the horizontal surface such that the main body portion gives the appearance of being a central portion of a free-standing clock, and a clock unit adapted to be supported at a fixed position with respect to the mounting member and the main body member.

[0012] Preferably, the clock kit further includes a base member adapted to be arranged in a position substantially aligned with the mounting member such that the mounting member, the main body portion, the clock unit and the base member give the appearance of being an integrated, free-standing clock. It is also preferred that the clock kit includes at least one interchangeable mounting member façade. In a preferred embodiment, the main body portion is flexible, however, a substantially rigid main body portion may be provided, as well.

[0013] The clock unit at least includes a driving mechanism, a clock-face substrate, a plurality of clock hands, at least one interchangeable clock-face

façade adapted to be secured to the clock-face substrate, and means for supporting the clock unit at the fixed position with respect to the mounting member and the main body portion. According to one embodiment of the present invention, the means for supporting the clock unit at the fixed position with respect to the mounting member and the main body portion comprises a hook member adapted to extend from the mounting member and a corresponding loop member positioned on a rear surface of the clock-face substrate.

[0014] According to another embodiment, the means for supporting the clock unit comprises magnetic means including, for example, an elongate member adapted to extend from the mounting member. According to one aspect, the elongate member comprises a metal, and at least one magnet is provided on a portion of the rear surface of the clock-face substrate to facilitate a magnetic connection. According to another aspect, the elongate member comprises at least one magnet configured on a surface thereof, and at least a portion of the rear surface of the clock-face substrate is metal, or the rear surface of the clock-face substrate includes a corresponding configuration of receiver magnets to facilitate a magnetic connection.

[0015] The at least one main body portion of the clock kit preferably comprises a plurality of different main body portions each having a pattern, color, texture or design on at least a front surface thereof. It is also preferred that at least one of the plurality of main body portions has a pattern, color, texture or design on a rear surface thereof such that the at least one main body portion is reversible. The material of the at least one main body portion can be at least one of any material selected from the group consisting of textiles, papers, cardboards, plastics, metal fabrics, natural fiber woven materials, ceramic woven fibers, metal sheets and wood sheets.

[0016] Preferably, a portion of the means for supporting the clock unit passes through an opening in the main body portion, such that the clock-face substrate resides on the front surface of the main body portion. The clock kit also preferably includes an interchangeable pendulum member adapted to extend

from the clock unit to assume a position with respect to the front surface of the main body portion.

[0017] According to another embodiment of the present invention, the clock kit further includes an accessory kit. The accessory kit includes at least one interchangeable façade adapted to be positioned on the mounting member, at least one interchangeable façade adapted to be positioned on the clock face substrate, and at least two main body portions each having a distinct, predetermined pattern, color, texture or design at least on a front surface thereof. Preferably, the accessory kit further includes an interchangeable pendulum member adapted to extend from the clock unit to assume a position with respect to the front surface of the main body portion, and at least one interchangeable façade adapted to be positioned on the base member.

[0018] According to another embodiment of the present invention, a clock is provided, including a mounting member adapted to be fastened to a vertical mounting surface at a predetermined distance from the floor, an interchangeable main body portion extending from a first end proximate the mounting member toward an opposed second end proximate the floor and defining a height of the main body portion, such that the main body portion gives the appearance of being a central portion of a free-standing floor clock, and a clock unit supported in a fixed position with respect to the mounting member and the main body member. It is also preferred that the clock according to present invention includes a base member positioned on a horizontal surface in a position substantially aligned with the second end of the main body portion. Preferably, the mounting member includes at least one quick-release connection mechanism for securing the main body portion to the mounting member, and the base member includes at least one quick-release connection mechanism for securing the main body portion to the base member.

[0019] According to yet another embodiment of the present invention, a clock is provided, including a mounting member adapted to be fastened to a vertical mounting surface at a predetermined distance from the floor and an interchangeable main body portion extending from a first end proximate the

mounting member toward an opposed second end proximate the floor and defining a height of the main body portion, such that the main body portion gives the appearance of being a central portion of a free-standing clock. A first quick-release connection mechanism for securing the first end of the main body portion to the mounting member is also provided. A clock unit that is supported in a fixed position with respect to the mounting member and the main body member, is also included, and the clock unit preferably includes at least a driving mechanism, a clock-face substrate, a plurality of clock hands, and means for supporting the clock unit at the fixed position with respect to the mounting member and the main body portion. Further, a base member is provided, positioned on a horizontal surface in a position substantially aligned with the mounting member, as well as a second quick-release connection mechanism for securing the second end of the main body portion to the base member.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] For a more complete understanding of the nature and objects of the present invention, reference should be made to the following detailed description of a preferred mode of practicing the invention, read in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIGS. 1A – 1D are schematic diagrams of an interchangeable clock having the appearance of being a free-standing floor clock according to one embodiment of the present invention, wherein FIG. 1A is a front view, FIG. 1B is a left-side view, FIG. 1C is a top view and FIG. 1 D is a bottom view;

FIG. 2 is an exploded view of the interchangeable clock of FIG 1A;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a clock kit according to one embodiment of the present invention; FIG. 4 is a schematic view of an accessory kit according to another embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 5 is a partial side view of another embodiment of an interchangeable clock according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0021] Figs. 1A –1C are schematic views of an interchangeable wall clock having the appearance of being a free-standing floor clock according to one embodiment of the present invention. The basic, general structure of an interchangeable clock according to the present invention is shown in the front view of Fig. 1A and the left-side view of Fig. 1B, which are best understood when read in connection with the exploded view shown in Fig. 2. It should also be noted that the right-side view is essentially a mirror image of the left-side view of Fig. 1B.

[0022] The mounting member **10** of the present invention is merely depicted as a block in the drawings having an upper surface **11**, a lower surface **12**, a pair of opposed side surfaces **13**, **14**, a front surface **15** and a rear surface **16**. It should be noted, however, that the exact shape of the mounting member **10** is not critical, and the mounting member **10** can include a variety of embellishments, contours, filigrees, moldings and the like without departing from the spirit of the present invention. The materials for the mounting member **10** are not limited and the mounting member **10** can be made from any suitable material including, but not limited to, wood, particle board, plaster, plastics, heavy-duty paper or laminated cardboard, ceramic or the like.

[0023] The mounting member **10** also includes a means for mounting to a vertical surface, such as a wall, in the form of the fixation member **17**. Fixation member **17** can be one or more of any type of fixation device including, but not limited to nails, tacks, screws, hook and wire mechanisms, and the like, so long as it is sufficient to at least support the weight of the mounting member **10**, main body portion **20** and the clock unit **30**.

[0024] A quick-release connection mechanism **18** is provided on the mounting member **10**. As shown in Figs. 1A, 1B, and 2, the quick-release connection mechanism **18** is positioned to extend at least slightly from the lower surface **12** of the mounting member **10**. The quick-release connection mechanism **18** can be made of one or more magnets, a metal member, hooks, buttons, snaps, loops, a portion of a hook-and-loop type fastener, or the like. Alternately, the

quick-release connection mechanism **18** can be formed as a dowel-receiving socket on the lower surface **12** of the mounting member **10**.

[0025] A main body portion **20** is provided, suspended from the mounting member **10**. The first end **21** of the main body portion **20** is connected to the quick-release connection mechanism **18** of the mounting member **10** via a corresponding quick-release connection mechanism **22**. The corresponding quick-release mechanism **22** can be a thin metal rod that is inserted into a pocket seam or sewn into a seam of the main body portion proximate the first end **21** thereof, as shown in Fig. 2, for example.

[0026] The exact type of connection mechanism used for the corresponding quick-release mechanism **22** is not critical, so long as it corresponds to the quick-release mechanism **18** provided on the mounting block **10** and so long as it is, in fact, quick releasing. For example, the corresponding quick-release mechanism **22** could also be one or more small magnets that are either provided on the second (rear) surface **26** of the main body portion **20** or that are sewn into a pocket seam or otherwise fixed to the main body portion **20** proximate the first end **21** thereof. The corresponding quick-release connection mechanism **22** could be a portion of a hook-and-loop type fastener that is fixed to the second (rear) surface **26** of the main body portion **20**. The corresponding quick-release connection mechanism **22** could likewise be one or more hooks, snaps, button-holes or loops, depending on the configuration of the quick-release connection mechanism **18**. Alternately, the corresponding quick-release mechanism **22** could be a dowel or rod member attached to the first end **21** of the main body portion **10**.

[0027] The main body portion **20** shown in Figs. 1A and 1B has an elongate shape having a length that is substantially greater than a width thereof. The shape of the main body portion **20** is not limited to the rectangular shape shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, for example, but the lateral edges and the first and second ends **21, 23** can be formed to have any contour, silhouette or shape to accomplish the desired design. In a preferred embodiment, however, the clock

1 maintains the appearance of being a free-standing floor clock no matter what the design particulars of the main body portion may be.

[0028] It should be noted, however, that the interchangeable clock **1** of the present invention can also be scaled down in size to resemble a mini-floor clock positioned on a shelf, for example. That is, the size of the interchangeable clock **1** according to the present invention is not limited to a grandfather-sized (i.e., greater than 77 inches tall), long-case type clock. As described in more detail below, the base of the clock could also be wall-mounted, either close to or spaced apart from the floor, depending on the particular design choices of the owner.

[0029] The main body portion **20** can be made from any type of material that provides the desired drape when the main body portion **20** is connected to the mounting member **10** as shown in Figs. 1A and 1B. It is preferred that the main body portion **20** has a very small thickness dimension. As shown in Fig. 1B, the thickness of the main body portion **10**, or the distance between the front surface **25** and the rear surface **26** thereof, is essentially the width of a single strip of fabric, for example. It should be noted, however, that the thickness is not limited to the embodiment shown in the drawings.

[0030] It is also preferred that the material of the main body portion **20** be sufficiently flexible such that the main body portion **20** can be manipulated into a variety of configurations without damaging the appearance of the main body portion in an un-manipulated, (i.e., flat or hanging) state. It should be noted, however, that the main body portion **20** can also be a substantially rigid member, such as cardboard covered in fabric, for example. The main body portion **20** can have any type of design, pattern, texture or color on one or both of the front **25** and rear **26** surfaces thereof, such that the main body portion **20** is reversible. These features of the main body portion **20** are described in more detail below in connection with the clock kit of Fig. 3 and the accessory kit shown in Fig. 4.

[0031] The clock unit **30** includes a clock-face substrate **31** having a front face surface **31a** and a rear surface **31b**. A driving member **36** is provided on the

rear surface **31b** of the clock-face substrate, and a pendulum extension **34** extends from the driving member **36**. A pendulum **33** is positioned on the terminal end of the pendulum extension **34**. The pendulum can be made from any suitable material, including wood, metals, alloys, composite materials, ceramics, weighted papers or cardboards, beads, acorns and assorted baubles or the like. It should be noted, however, that a pendulum may not be a functional requirement for the clock unit **30**, which can be battery or AC operated, wound, gear-driven or otherwise supplied with sufficient means to operate the time keeping mechanism.

[0032] While the clock unit **30** shown in Figs. 1A-1B is a simple design, the clock-face substrate **31** can have any shape or any size. The particulars are dictated only by the desires of the designer. Further, the clock unit **30** can feature other aesthetic amenities, such as chimes, a cuckoo-style signal, or other auditory enhancements.

[0033] As shown in Fig. 1B and Fig. 2, means for supporting the clock unit **30** at a fixed distance with respect to the mounting member **10** and the main body portion **20** is provided in the form of a loop **35a** positioned on the rear surface **31b** of the clock-face substrate **31** that mates with the hook member **35b** extending from a portion of the lower surface **12** of the mounting member **10**. A portion of the hook member **35b** extends through an opening **27** (see Fig. 2) provided in the main body portion **20** from the second surface **26** thereof toward the first surface **25** thereof such that the clock unit **30** is essentially mounted on the first surface **25** of the main body portion **20** as shown in Figs. 1A and 1B.

[0034] As shown in the partial side view of Fig. 5, means for supporting the clock unit **30** at a fixed distance with respect to the mounting member **10** and the main body portion **20** is provided, in part, in the form of an elongate bar **35c** that extends from a portion of the lower surface **12** of the mounting member **10**. The elongate bar **35c** includes a plurality of magnets **35d** on a surface thereof that is immediately adjacent the rear surface **26** of the main body portion **20**. In addition, a box **36a** is provided on the rear surface **31b** of

the clock-face substrate, surrounding the driving mechanism 36. A surface 36b of the box 36a immediately adjacent the front surface 25 of the main body portion 20 is made of metal to mate with the magnets 35d on the elongate bar 35c, such that a magnetic connection can be securely achieved, even with the main body portion 20 interposed between the metal surface 36b of the box 36a and the magnets 35d. In that manner, there is no need to provide an opening 27 in the main body portion 20, which decreases the degree of precision required to manufacture the main body portion 20, and in turn, reduces the cost.

Additionally, the embodiment shown in Fig. 5 also enables faster assembly and interchangeability of the components of the clock 1.

[0035] Although it is not shown in Fig. 5, the surface 36b of the box 36a could also be provided with a corresponding number of receiver magnets to facilitate another type of magnetic connection in addition to the connection described above. It will be understood by those skilled in the art that the magnets should have sufficient strength and a sufficient arrangement to support the clock unit 30 and prevent any positional shifting despite the motion of the pendulum 33.

[0036] The means for supporting the clock unit 30 could also include one or more hook members provided on a portion of the surface 36b of the box 36a shown in Fig. 5, for example. That is, in lieu of the magnetic means described above, the hooks extend outwardly a short distance and then a distance downwardly from the surface 36b, such that the hooks pierce the material (e.g., fabric) of the front surface 25 of the main body portion 20 to fasten the clock unit 30 in place. It should be noted that such a hook means for supporting the clock unit 30 is preferably used in connection with a main body portion 20 that includes a substantially rigid support portion and a flexible covering portion, such as cardboard covered in fabric, for example. While this embodiment is not shown in the drawings, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that this variation, along with other variations, can be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

[0037] It should also be noted, however, that the clock unit 30 could instead be fastened directly to the same vertical surface (i.e., wall) as the mounting

member **10** by providing a fixing member, for example, a hook, nail, screw, or other suitable projection-type fixing member, that is fixed to the wall at a predetermined position with respect to the fixed mounting member **10**. In that manner, the fixing member would pass through the opening **27** from the second surface **26** of the main body portion **20** and mate with the loop **35a** provided on the rear surface **31b** of the clock-face substrate **31** in a similar manner as the hook **35b**. Additionally, a fixing member such as those described above could also be directly provided on the rear surface **31b** of the clock unit **30** to pass through the opening **27** from the front surface **25** of the main body portion **20** and affix the clock unit **30** directly to the wall.

[0038] The second end **23** of the main body portion **20** includes a second quick-release connection mechanism **24**. Although the second quick-release connection mechanism **24** is shown as a thin metal rod provided in a seam pocket of the second end **23** of the main body portion in Fig. 2, the thin metal rod could also be provided directly on the second surface **25** of the main body portion **20**, as well. It should also be noted that the second quick-release connection mechanism **24** could be one or more of any of the types of quick-release connection mechanisms described above with respect to the quick-release connection mechanism **18** and the corresponding quick-release connection mechanism **22**.

[0039] A base member **40** is also provided. Like the mounting member **10**, the base member **40** is merely depicted as a block having an upper surface **41**, a lower surface **42**, a pair of opposed side surfaces **43**, **44**, a front surface **45** and a rear surface **46**. It should be noted, however, that the exact shape of the base member **40** is not critical, and can include a variety of aesthetic embellishments, contours, filigrees, moldings, pedestal feet or the like without departing from the spirit of the present invention. Suitable materials for the base member **40** are similar to those described above in connection with the materials for the mounting member **10**. The base member **40** shown in Figs. 1A and B is positioned on the floor, however, the base member **40** could also be positioned on a surface above the floor, such as a shelf, or spaced a distance

from the floor and directly mounted on a wall in much the same manner as the mounting member **10**.

[0040] A quick-release connection mechanism **47** that corresponds to the second quick-release connection member **24** on the second end **23** of the main body portion **20** is provided. As shown in Fig. 2, the quick-release connection mechanism **47** comprises two magnets provided in a trench **48** formed on the upper surface **41** of the base member **40**. At least a portion of the second end **23** of the main body portion **20** is received within the trough and secured in place with the corresponding quick-release connection mechanisms **24** and **47**.

[0041] The top view and the bottom view shown in Figs. 1C and 1D show that the interchangeable clock **1** requires little floor space, that is, only as much floor space as necessary to accommodate the base member **40**. Further, the profile of the clock (best seen in Fig. 2), when viewed from the top and bottom, does not protrude beyond the boundaries established by the dimensions of the mounting member **10** and the base member **40**, which can be varied depending upon the desired design.

[0042] Fig. 3 is a perspective view of a clock kit **2** according to one embodiment of the present invention. The clock kit **2** is positioned in an interior portion of a container, such as box **50**. The dimensions of box **50** are limited only in that the length, width and height should be sufficient to accommodate at least the mounting member **10**, at least one main body portion **20** (preferably in a compact form), a clock unit **30**, pendulum **33**, pendulum extensions **34**, and any hardware, such as the hook member **35b**, for example, that is required to assemble the interchangeable clock **1** from the clock kit **2**. It should be noted, however, that while the clock kit **2** of Fig. 3 also includes a base member **40** and two additional main body portions **20**, **20** that have been manipulated into a tubular configuration to conserve space, these items could instead be included in an accessory kit, such as accessory kit **3** shown in Fig. 4.

[0043] Fig. 4 is a perspective view of an accessory kit **3** according to another embodiment of the present invention. Accessory kit **3** includes two interchangeable mounting member façades **19a**, **19b** and two interchangeable

base member facades **49a**, **49b**. It is preferred that the aesthetic design of the interchangeable mounting member façades **19a**, **19b** corresponds to a coordinating base member façade **49a**, **49b** to achieve the desired integrated look for the clock **1** when the façades are positioned on the mounting member **10** or the base member **40** of the clock **1** as described below.

[0044] As shown in Fig. 4, mounting member façade **19a**, for example, is formed as a four-sided structure having a top side **51**, a front side **54**, a first side **52** that is joined to the top side **51** and the front side **54** at right angles, and an opposed second side **53** that is joined to the top side **51** and the front side **54** at right angles to define a space **50**. As such, the façade **19a** is essentially an elongate rectangular box that is missing a bottom side and a back side.

[0045] The façade **19b**, however, is a three-sided structure including two opposing sides **52**, **54** that are joined at right angles to a respective end of front side **54** to define a space **50**. It should be noted, however, that the exact structures of the mounting member façades according to the present invention are not limited to the specific examples shown in Fig. 4. Any structure that will sufficiently cover the visible portions of the mounting block **10** can be used, including structures that involve intricate aesthetic features such as moldings, filigrees or the like.

[0046] As shown, the mounting member façade **19a** is dimensioned to be positioned over the mounting member **10** such that the front surface **15** of the mounting member **10** is received with the space **50** defined by the first and second sides **52**, **53**, top side **51** and front side **54** of the façade **19a**. In that manner, the upper surface **11**, the front surface **15** and the side surfaces **13**, **14** of the mounting member **10** will be covered by the façade **19a**. The lower surface **12**, and the rear surface **16** are not covered by the mounting member façade **19a**, since these surfaces are not visually apparent when the clock **1** is mounted on a wall, for example.

[0047] The mounting member façade **19b** is also dimensioned to be positioned over the mounting member **10** such that the front surface **15** of the mounting member **10** is received within a space **50** defined by the opposing sides **52**, **53**.

and the front side **54** of the mounting member façade **19b**. In that manner, the front surface **15** and the side surfaces **13, 14** of the mounting member **10** will be covered by the façade **19b**. The upper surface **11**, the lower surface **12**, and the rear surface **16** are not covered by the mounting member façade **19b**, however, since those surfaces are not visually apparent when the clock **1** is mounted on a wall such that the distance from the floor to the upper surface **11** of the mounting member **10** is greater than about 72 inches.

[0048] The mounting member façades **19a, 19b** can be secured to the mounting member **10** by any means including, but not limited to, corresponding pairs of grooves and pegs provided on the mounting member **10** and in the space **50** of the façades **19a, 19b**, tabs, corresponding hook-and-loop type fasteners, or merely by virtue of a closely dimensioned press fit between the mounting member façades **19a, 19b** and the mounting member **10** itself. The means by which the mounting member façades **19a, 19b** are secured is not critical, so long as the connection is stable while still being substantially temporary enough to enable quick removal and facilitate easy interchangeability between façades **19a** and **19b**, for example, or between other façades having a similar structure to those of **19a, 19b** that are not shown in Fig. 4.

[0049] The base member façades **49a, 49b** shown in Fig. 4 have a similar structure described above in connection with the mounting member façade **19a**. The top side **61** of the base member façade **49a**, for example, further includes means, such as a cut-out portion or an opening **65**, to provide access to the trench **48** in which the quick-release connection mechanism **47** is provided, even when the base member façade **49a** is positioned to cover the base member **40**. The base member façade **49b** having a partial top side **61** is shown as another example of a base member façade. The exact structure of the base member façades **49a, 49b** are not critical, so long as the desired portions of the base member **40** are properly covered to achieve the desired aesthetic appearance and so long as the quick-release connection mechanism **47** is accessible.

[0050] The base member façades **49a**, **49b** can be secured to the base member **40** in any manner similar to those described above in connection with securing the mounting member façade **19a**.

[0051] The mounting member façades **19a**, **19b** and the base member façades **49a**, **49b** can be constructed from and decorated with any material that provides the desired aesthetic appearance. The façades are preferably interchangeable veneers or overlays made from natural woods, laminated woods, particle board-type composite materials, glass, plastics (e.g., acrylic, vinyl or other artificial materials) made to resemble wood, or plastic materials that do not resemble wood per se. The particular finish provided on the façades includes, but is not limited to, any variety of wood finish, metallic finish, mirrored finish, any variety or color of paint (e.g., antiqued, flat, glossy, hand-painted designs, etc.), patterned papers and acrylic overlays.

[0052] Clock-face façades **37**, **38** are also included in the accessory kit **3** shown in Fig. 4. The clock-face façades **37**, **38** are dimensioned to cover the front surface **31a** of the clock-face substrate **31**, and can be secured thereto by any suitable quick-release means. Such quick-release means include, but are not limited to, tabs provided around the periphery of the clock-face façade **37** or **38** that secure to the rear surface **31b** of the clock-face substrate, hook-and-loop type fasteners (i.e., VELCRO®), or a rim provided around the periphery of the clock-face façade **37**, **38** that provides a press fit about the outer periphery of the clock-face substrate **31**.

[0053] The clock-face façades **37**, **38** can have any shape, so long as the façades substantially cover the clock-face substrate **31**, and the clock-face façades can have any type of numerical clock-face, or no numerical clock-face, provided on any type of pattern, design, color or texture. The materials used for the clock-face façades **37**, **38** are not critical, so long as they are constructed to be light enough to be supported by the means for supporting the clock unit **30** at a fixed position from the mounting member **10**, whether that means comprises a suspension means provided in connection with the mounting member **10** or a direct connection to the wall. Some examples of suitable materials for the

clock-face façades 37, 38 include, but are not limited to, molded or otherwise formed plastic materials, wood (carved, painted, finished, un-finished), glass, mirror, light ceramic materials, metal sheets, or plates and fabric or paper covered cardboard (e.g., decoupage papers).

[0054] The accessory kit 3 shown in Fig. 4 also includes a plurality of main body portions 20, 20, 20. Each main body portion 20, 20, 20 has a different color, design pattern or texture provided on at least the front surface 25 thereof. For example, the main body portions 20 could be provided with a variety of seasonal themes and colors, sports themes and colors or collector themes, and the accessory kits could comprise a particular scheme or theme. Another example of a design option kit includes providing one or more of an opaque, translucent, or transparent main body portion having any color, pattern or no color (i.e., clear) or pattern, on which the consumer could apply their own personal decorations, including, but not limited to photographs, children's art work, pins, stickers, greeting cards, collector memorabilia, recipe cards, book marks, phone numbers, and the like.

[0055] Additionally, different patterns, colors, textures or designs could be provided on the rear surface 26 of any one or more of the main body portions 20, such as the main body portion 28 shown in Fig. 4, to provide a reversible main body portion 28.

[0056] The main body portions 20 can be made from any type of material that provides the desired drape when the main body portion 20 is connected to the mounting member 10 as shown in Figs. 1A and 1B. It is also preferred that the material of the main body portion 20 be sufficiently flexible such that the main body portion 20 can be manipulated into a variety of configurations without damaging the appearance of the main body portion in an un-manipulated, (i.e., flat or hanging) state. For example, the main body portion 29a of Fig. 4 is rolled into a tubular configuration for placement in a container, such as the box 50 shown in Fig. 3. On the other hand, the main body portion 29b of Fig. 4 is shown in a folded configuration. In either case, or in whatever manner the main body portion 20 is manipulated, the manipulated size and shape should be

smaller and more compact than the un-manipulated size and shape to better facilitate storage, shipping, packaged presentation for sale, and the like.

[0057] For the clock kit **2** and the accessory kit **3**, the flexibility of the main body portion **20** is important in providing the most compact packaging options for presentation and storage. If metallic sheets are desired for the main body portion **20**, however, those sheets could be divided into smaller pieces and linked, or provided with a means for linking, in a manner that likewise enables compact storage. In the case that a clock **1** according to the present invention is directly purchased in a partially-assembled state, however, and not as a part of a kit, the main body portion could be made of an un-divided metallic sheet, glass sheet, wood panel or the like extending from the mounting member **10** to the base member **40** to provide an integrated look.

[0058] Additional pendulum extensions **34a**, **34b** and additional pendulums **33a**, **33b** are also provided in the accessory kit shown in Fig. 4. The additional pendulums **33a**, **33b** preferably correspond to the theme and style of the kit, and in particular, correspond to the design of the mounting member façades and the base member façades included therein. The additional pendulums **33a**, **33b** can be made of any suitable material, including, but not limited to plated or un-plated nickel, brass, silver, gold, platinum, stainless steel, any variety of wood, any suitable plastic material, any suitable ceramic material, or any suitable composite material. The pendulums **33a**, **33b** can also feature any type of aesthetic design, color, pattern, texture or finish.

[0059] Though it is not shown in the drawings, the interchangeable clock **1** of the present invention can also be fabricated from a mounting member that is adapted to house a continuous roll of a material that includes a first part that extends toward and is looped around a means provided in an inner portion of the base member to comprise a continuous loop main body portion. The continuous loop main body portion is looped around a portion of the base member and a second part extends back up toward the mounting member, but is positioned behind the first part of the continuous loop main body portion so that it is not easily seen from the front of the clock. The material roll can

include a plurality of main body portions in aesthetically different designs, patterns, colors and textures that are fixed end-to-end to form a continuous loop. The overall appearance of the clock can thus be changed by simply removing the clock unit and tugging the first part of the continuous loop main body portion until the desired pattern, color, design or texture spans the distance between the mounting member and the base member. Since the configuration is one of a continuous loop, the undesired portions are re-rolled in the means provided in the mounting member until another time for display is chosen.

[0060] While the present invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to the preferred mode as illustrated in the drawings, it will be understood by one skilled in the art that various changes in detail may be effected therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the claims.